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E P I S T L E

TO

P E T E R P I N D A R.

T. BAYLIS, Printer,
Greville-Street, Hatton-Garden.

EPISTLE

TO

PETER PINDAR.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE BAVIAD.

John. Gifford Esq.

Enfin ton impudence,
Téméraire Vieillard! aura sa récompense.

BOILEAU.

Miscreant! the scourge that you to-day endure,
Cuts to the bone—but then it cuts to cure.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY.

1800.

INTRODUCTION.

IT has been my good fortune, in company with many others infinitely my superiors in talents and worth, to attract, for a long series of years, the scurrility of “a wholesale dealer in doggerel rhymes,”* known by the nick-name of Peter Pindar. As I really considered his abuse as a tribute to my little, my less than little, merit, I received it, as became me, with modest silence, and made no boast of the satisfaction it gave me.

On the appearance of the “Pursuits of Literature,” this Peter grew more elaborate in his scurrility, and I more pleased. I love to gratify my readers, and shall therefore extract, from that justly celebrated work, the passage which relates to him. It is, I believe, pretty generally known already; nevertheless, I will venture, as Shakspeare says, to “stale it a little more.”

* Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine.

“ In this verse” (where the name of Pindar occurs), “ I speak of the great Theban ; but there is an obscure person, stiling himself PETER PINDAR, of whom I shall say a few words. This man certainly possesses a species of humour ; but it is exhausted by a repetition of the *same* manner, and nearly the *same* ideas, even to disgust. He has the power of rhyming ludicrously, and is sometimes even gifted with poetry ; and finally he is puffed up with a vanity and self-conceited importance, almost without a parallel. This *obscure* man has contrived, by these qualifications, to thrust himself upon the public notice, and become the scorn of every man of character and of virtue. Such is the blasphemy, such is the impiety, the obscenity, the impudence, and the contempt of all decent respect, which pervades his numerous pamphlets in verse, that the reader is ill repaid by the sallies of humour which animate this mass of crudities. I will not waste a verse on such a character ; but say honestly and plainly, that though I can sometimes be pleased with the manner, yet I think I perceive such a rooted depravity and malignity of heart, that, from the consideration of his works, I can affirm almost unequivocally of this obscure man in the words of the severest writer of antiquity :

“ Stupet hic vitio, et fibris increvit opimum

“ Pingue, caret culpâ, nescit quid perdat, et alto

“ Demersus, summa rursum non bullit in unda.”

“ *N. B.*—This man’s works, now published (1794), amount in *value* to above *Four Guineas*; but we are informed that a set may be had for two guineas and a half in 4to, or for two guineas in 8vo !!! What an inducement to a purchaser !!! Posterity (if it can be supposed that such trash should exist) will be astonished that the present age could look with patience on such malignant ribaldry.”—P. of L. p. 51.

This passage, and indeed the whole work, Peter did me the honour (and a very great honour I should have thought it from any other hand) to attach to my name; and frequent and furious were the thrusts aimed at me in consequence of it, from the by-corners of every news-paper, magazine and review* into which he was permitted to creep. None of them reached me, as I have already observed; or if they did, it was merely to tickle; and I passed on, like a great lady of yore, “in maiden meditation, fancy free.”

* I have been told that the unmanly reflections on me in the *Critical Review*, where I have been wantonly insulted—not for what I did write, for that is a matter of course, but for what I did not—were all furnished by Peter Pindar!! If this be true, the Editors of that work are more to be pitied than I am. Enough of this. I have offended these gentlemen—they, perhaps, know how, for I do not;—and I neither look for candour nor justice at their hands, nor, indeed, am I at all solicitous about the matter—only, methinks, I could wish that when I am to be cut up, they would call in, if it were but for the credit of their slaughter-house, some less bungling butcher than Peter Pindar.

But

But fortune had not yet done with us. In the “ Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine” (a work of which the good effects are hourly becoming more and more manifest) there appeared, a few months since, the following strictures on Peter, in the course of a very admirable critique on his “ Nil Admirari.”

“ Peter seems to think it strange that the ladies, instead of *smiling* themselves at his doggerel, should wonder “ how the world can *smile*.” We may possibly be able to suggest some few reasons, which might have restrained even the strongest propensity in those ladies, and in every virtuous mind, to *smile*, were his pages calculated, by their wit and pleasantry, which they certainly are not, to excite a smile, except, indeed, it be the smile of *contempt* at the impotence of his malice. They may probably have traced the progress of Peter from his first entrance into public life; they may have remarked the profligate priest, whose conversation exhibits a disgusting mixture of obscenity and blasphemy* ; they may have heard of his mischievous disposi-

* “ This man, or rather this monster in human shape, is in the habit of expressing a wish, founded on the excess of his attachment to mere sensual gratifications, that *God would grant him a lease of his life for 500 years*; and of bursting forth into impious exclamations which a religious mind shudders to think of—He has even been known to exclaim “ G—d blast death; I could spit in G—d’s face for inventing death”—Following up this horrid blasphemy with an action corresponding with the sentiment!!! It will easily be conceived, that to such a being as this, the idea of death cannot be very consolatory !”

tion,

tion, when the obscure resident of a country town, employed in libelling his neighbours, and descending to the most mean and paltry arts for a subsistence; they may have followed him to town, endeavouring to live on the talents of a man whom he ostentatiously affected to patronize, under the express condition of receiving one-half of the produce of his labours; they may have watched him in his subsequent attempts to obtain notoriety and wealth, by bribing the servants of his Sovereign to betray their trust, to reveal his family secrets, and to expose all those little foibles from which no man upon earth is exempt, in order to render them objects of public derision and scorn; recollecting, no doubt, that the regicides of France attempted to render their Sovereign ridiculous before they ventured to murder him; they may have marked his progress from seditious to treasonable insinuations, in recommending it to subjects occasionally to behead their Monarchs; they may have noted the invariable tendency of his works to depreciate worth, and to calumniate virtue, not only forgetting, but absolutely perverting, the very object of satire—the correction of vice; and they may, lastly, have heard of his base acceptance of a salary from that government which he had incessantly vilified, to write in opposition to the very men whose principles and whose conduct he had invariably praised*.

—A re-

* “ Lest he should dare to deny this assertion, as we know he has been in the habit of doing, especially at Bath, we will remind him that there is written evidence of the fact in existence; and we will also recall to his recollection, his fraudulent

—A recollection of these facts would, we should apprehend, suffice to check a *smile*, and to justify any expression of surprise, that the world should *smile* at *such* productions of *such* a Bard.—We confess, it appears to us, that any readers who were apprized of these circumstances and could *smile*, must not only sympathize with the feelings, but favour the principles of the man;—proofs of a weak head and a bad heart.”

These strictures,* of which I knew nothing till I saw them in print, Peter also thought fit, with his habitual disregard of truth and

intentions, his scandalous evasions, and his cowardly escape, “chop-fallen and confounded,” when challenged with his baseness, and called upon to retract the impudent falshoods which he had dared to advance.—He at least will understand us.

* I have great pleasure in mentioning, that while I was transcribing them for the press, I received from New York a republication of a poem printed in this country, called the “Unsexed Females,” accompanied by an Appendix containing the very passages I have taken from the Anti-Jacobin Review. As few copies of this work have probably reached England, I shall present my reader with the brief introduction of the American Editor. Peter, whose most familiar expression is “better be damn’d than not mentioned,” will be delighted at finding that his infamy is talked of in more than one hemisphere.

“With Peter’s satirical pieces almost every reader is, in some degree, acquainted. Few will want to be told that his chief delight has ever consisted in ridiculing the *wise* and the *virtuous*; but, it is far from being generally known, in this country (America), that the last effort of his malignant and impious pen was pointed at *Miss Hannah More*, a lady who has long been looked upon as an honour to her sex and her country.”

and decency, to impute to me, and became absolutely frantic.—After raving from November to June, his malady seems to have found a temporary alleviation in a copious discharge of abuse, which, like Edmund Curl's, of filthy memory, savours strongly of the place in which it was produced. If it has preserved him, though but for an instant, from the horrors of a strait waistcoat, I am satisfied ; and cheerfully give him leave to repeat the operation as often as he fancies it will do him good. “ If a man will be beaten with brains,” says our old bard, “ he shall wear nothing clean about him.” Certainly, with *brains* ; but the filthy drivel of this impotent dotard, which never yet fell an inch beyond his own beard, can reach nobody, and, impure as it is, can sully nothing but himself.

“ MISS MORE published, last year, “ *Strictures on Female Education*,” which were mentioned with high encomiums, in a note which the Bishop of London added to his last Pastoral Charge. Peter Pindar (who is truly a fiend in human shape), saw, with pain, the extraordinary success of a work, wherein genius was displayed in support of morality and religion ; and, casting behind him the consequences, he resolved to attack, not the work, but its author, which he did in a string of ribald poems, entitled “ *Nil Admirari*.”

“ This *direct* attack on virtue and religion, this unbearable outrage on morals, on decency, and on common sense, seems, at last, to have roused, against the profligate poetaster, the public indignation, which is well expressed in the following critique, extracted from the “ *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*,” for November last.”

It is singular that Peter Pindar * should father on me every account of himself or his works, which happens to displease him ; more especially, as I never shewed any forwardness in talking about him or his ribaldry (which, indeed, I seldom saw), and have no acquaintance with any person whatever, who has the misfortune to

* Why the fellow took the name of *Pindar*, it is not easy to say. Some *alias*, I will allow, it was proper for him to take ; for the name he originally went by, had long been synonymous with every thing base and infamous ; and was, therefore, to be laid aside : but still it remains a question why he took that of *Pindar*. *Pindar*, it is true, wrote *Odes*, but they have nothing in common with the draggle-tailed doggrel of Peter ; nor does he differ less in his moral and literary character, than in his poetical one, from this beastly profaner of his name. *Pindar* was a man of piety, a sincere follower of the religion of his country, and a warm and enthusiastic admirer of every great and illustrious name ; while Peter ———, but I disdain to pursue the contrast.

I will only add, that *Pindar* was loved and admired while living, and honoured and lamented when dead : while Peter has been scorned and abhorred through a long and profligate life ; and when he drops, as he soon must, into the grave, will be followed by the hate and detestation of all but Atheists and Traitors. The rest will experience at his death, some portion of that pleasure which disburthened Italy felt when *Tisiphone* (his sister-fiend) after sowing the seeds of rancour and animosity, opened the jaws of *Acheron*, and plunged to her native hell

————— rupto ingens *Acheronte* vorago

Pestiferas aperit fauces ; quæis condita *Erynnis*,

Invisum numen, terras, cœlumque levabat !

Away then with the name of *Pindar*. Yet as Peter must have some name, and cannot with prudence take that of *W*——, I will present him with two—either of which

to call him friend. This singularity, I am persuaded, could only arise from a consciousness of having merited my resentment by a series of wanton and unprovoked attacks, which his silly vanity represented as formidable, and which my conviction of their deplorable imbecility incessantly led me to despise and forget.

And such is the manner in which I should have treated his last ebullition of frenzy, had it not been suggested to me, that Peter's perseverance in abuse evidently proceeded from an opinion that I feared him*. This was an idea which had never struck

which will serve his turn to admiration. I speak of Peribomius and Natta—The first a sad, poor wretch, of whom I find this apologetical account :

————— hunc ego fatis

Imputo, qui vultu morbum, incessuque fatetur.

The second, cousin-german to the former, and whose resemblance to Peter has been already recognized by the author of the “Pursuits of Literature,” is thus described by my friend, Mr. Drummond,

Natta, to virtue lost, knows not its price,
Fattens in sloth, and STUPEFIES IN VICE ;
Sunk in the gulph, immerg'd in guilt he lies,
Has not the power, nor yet the wish to rise.

* I observe in one place, that Peter fancies he has mortified me by expressing his contempt of the Baviad. “I may,” quoth he, “have said, &c. &c.” Now, what he *may* have said is a matter of just as much indifference to me as what he may hereafter say : neither the one or the other ever engaged my thoughts for a single moment. But what bloated Aristarchus have we here ? Gracious Heavens !

struck me, and which, indeed, I could not hear with patience, when it was first mentioned. *Fear!* No, never in my humblest moments did so unworthy a thought possess me as that of being suspected of fearing so feeble, so odious, so contemptible, so utterly despicable an object as Peter Pindar!

My literary career has been short and unimportant; and yet there is one part of it on which I look back with somewhat like pride: I mean the ridding of this country of Antony Pasquin. Antony, like Peter, was a general pest: he had been “fattening in his dungeon on the filthy dregs of slander and obscenity;” and when I dragged him forth to day, when I declared of him, what I should have no hesitation to declare of Peter, “that his acquaintance was infamy, and his touch poison,” this abandoned miscreant had the temerity to come into a court of justice, and ask protection for his character.

I had taken care to furnish the counsel with a number of extracts from Antony’s voluminous productions. Of these Mr. Garrow was permitted to read only a few, before he was interrupted by the indignation of the jury; when he broke forth into the following impassioned and eloquent address.

Does Peter flatter himself that I want *his* praise? that I am solicitous for *his* good opinion? O fortune! dear fortune! whatever mishaps thou may’st have in store for me, do not, I beseech thee, subject me to that keenest of all mortifications, to that lowest of all degradations, the approbation of Peter Pindar!

It

It is only necessary to premise, that I quote from the trial subjoined to the last edition of the Baviad; for so immediately does every word *apply* to Peter Pindar, that the reader might otherwise imagine it was fabricated for the purpose. The *application*, however, naturally arises from the perfect similarity of the two men *, both in the words of the Court, “*PESTILENT PAUPERS,*

* I have drawn up a parallel “after the manner of Plutarch” between Antony and Peter: there is some humour in it, and therefore I reserve it for a future publication, as I am unwilling to violate the seriousness of the present by any admixture of levity.

The only difference that struck me in the first design of my parallel, was that of Antony’s ending where Peter began: I mean, with ridiculing His Majesty. In adverting, however, to Peter’s adventures in Cornwall, I was soon satisfied that the resemblance was perfect throughout. Peter, like Antony, I perceived, began with small game, contenting himself with vilifying his friends and acquaintance: nor was it, till, like his co-rival, he had gone through a proper course of “purgings, pumpings, blanketings, and blows,” that he grew timorous and wary, and confined himself almost entirely to insulting the King. I do not give Peter credit for much *sense*, but I know no fool that equals him in *cunning*, of which his reasoning on this subject is a notable sample. “I will take advantage,” quoth he, “of the licence of the press, and attack my Sovereign. I will charge him with a thousand failings, a thousand errors. I will lie without measure, and without shame; he cannot reply, he will not punish: and I shall, without visiting the whipping-post or the pillory, derive a maintenance from the rabble of every denomination, who take a malignant delight in the aspersion of their superiors.”

So reasoned Peter, and so, but somewhat too late, reasoned his full-brother Antony. We have seen the fate of the latter: that of the former is yet undecided,

ΘΕΩΝ ΕΝΙ ΓΥΝΑΟΣΙ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ.

who

who go about through the public, levying contributions, and destroying every character in the community*.”

I return to Mr. Garrow—“ I see by your countenances, Gentlemen, that it is unnecessary to proceed any further with this man’s infamous and abominable productions. I will not, therefore, harass your feelings ; let them rest for the present.—But I will appeal to your sense of propriety,—to that of all who hear me, and ask, whether this COMMON LIBELLER, this vile traducer of honour and integrity, this HIRELING BLASTER of youth and innocence, should be suffered to come into this court and ask satisfaction for being described under the character he has voluntarily and ostentatiously assumed ? Should he, who has been proved before you to be the author of works of which every line is a calumny, sue for your protection, under the pretence that he has been calumniated ? Shall he say to you, Gentlemen—I have been from my youth up earning a scandalous subsistence by VILLIFYING MY SOVEREIGN, *insulting his august family, belying his ministers, traducing his courts of justice, and slandering his subjects*, FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST ; give me, therefore, ample damages, because this dirty occupation is not sufficiently profitable ? ”

“ Shall he say, I have *violated the ear of modesty in my writings*, I have *ridiculed the ordinances of our Holy Religion*, I have BLASPHEMED——”

* See Baviad, p. 182.

‘ Here some of the Jury got up, and Lord Kenyon desired Mr. Garrow to stop, for that more was evidently unnecessary.’

He then said, “ that it was their duty to consider whether the
“ author of such works as they had heard read, and described,
“ had a right to call for damages.”

“ With what face,” continued his Lordship, “ can THIS
“ FELLOW find fault with the publication of the Defendant,
“ when it appears that the passage here libelled attaches to him
“ merely as Antony Pasquin, a name which he has prefixed
“ to writings of *the most infamous nature*. It appears to me,
“ that the author of the Baviad has acted a very meritorious part
“ in exposing this man; and I do most earnestly wish and hope
“ that some method will ere long be fallen upon, to prevent all
“ such UNPRINCIPLED AND MERCENARY WRETCHES from
“ going about unbridled in society, to the great annoyance and
“ disquietude of the public.”

The Jury, without a moment’s hesitation, nonsuited the Plaintiff, and the audience hissed him out of Court; from whence, without staying to thank his counsel, he fled to America.

I do not expect to rid this country of Peter, nor do I, indeed, wish it, as he is too old and feeble for any useful purpose whatever; whereas Antony (his superior in every bodily endowment), drives a wheel-barrow, which, for his better accommodation, is

chained to his middle, with great credit to himself, and great advantage to the community, along the Albany road. But I certainly do hope to turn him from his present course of iniquity, into a way of life more befitting his grey hairs*. If he must live, though, as a French wit once observed, I do not see the necessity of it; yet if he must live, I *do* certainly flatter myself with the idea of compelling him to seek the means—not in hawking about the refuse of Billingsgate and the Brothel, under the name of “Odes,”—but in penning elegies, and dying speeches for the felons of Newgate; an employ for which his years, and the poor dog-trot pace of his broken-winded muse, just appear to qualify him.

IN the short view which I have given of the life of a man, who for near half a century, has persisted in defaming every thing that is great, and honourable, and virtuous, and holy amongst us, I labour less anxiously to shew how well he is qualified, by nature and habit, for the task, than to hold up to his

* I am much pleased with a passage in the Life of Burns. “I never saw him angry but twice,” says his biographer (p. 96), “once for some neglect in the foreman of the band; and the other time it was with an *old man* (it does not appear whether it was with Peter or not,) for using smutty inuendos, and double entendres. Were every *foul-mouthed old man* to receive a check in this way, it would be to the advantage of the rising generation.” Excellent!

few admirers (nearly, in my opinion, as worthless as himself,) a slight sketch of the man whom it has delighted them to honour; and to teach those who have attracted his notice, that is, his abuse, how little they have to apprehend from the malice of an impotent scribbler who, having wasted his youth and manhood in unprofitable depravity, is fallen in the dregs of life, into merited poverty, neglect, and contempt.

I can foresee but two objections that will be made to the following Epistle: its severity, and its unvarying tone of reprobation. I answer to the last, that Peter is the creature of the poet realized, the *Monstrum, nulla virtute redemptum à vitiis*; and that if in the horrid monotony of such a man's life, nothing occurs of a light or amusing nature, the fault is not to be charged on me. I describe what I find, and rein in my imagination and my disposition to wander into pleasantry, with a strong and watchful hand. To the first objection, I have still a more obvious reply. I put it to the conscience of my readers, whether "a being who," as the Anti-Jacobin Review happily expresses it, "has rioted for years on the fruits of his rancour, his impudence, "and his falsehood," has any claims to tenderness? Add to this, that Peter is not a chicken. What would mangle another, only tickles him. Gross fat involves his heart, and, in the words of my motto, he must be "cut to the bone," before he will begin to wince. He is a very Vatinius. Indeed, on reflection, I think
this

this name would suit him better than either of the two already provided for him. Vatinius, my reader knows, had made himself so odious to the Roman people by his vices (his Pindariana), that whenever he went abroad, men, women, and children followed him with cabbage-stalks, turnip-tops, rotten apples; nay, saith my author, even with pine-cones, till he took shelter in some brothel or gin-shop, for no other place would receive him. These peltings were repeated so often, that the poor wretches' head grew, at length, perfectly callous, and shattered all this vegetable artillery to atoms; so that the people were finally obliged, in their own defence, to have recourse to tiles and brick-bats!

With this I take my leave—humbly requesting the Critics when, after catching a glow of tender sensibility from the perusal of Peter's "most interesting Postscript," they proceed, from a due respect to the delicacy of his feelings, to reprobate the asperity of this retort—humbly requesting them, I say, to take into their consideration, that I have borne his abuse for more than fifteen years, without a complaining word; that I never gave him, either directly, or indirectly, the slightest cause for offence; and that I now declare, in the most solemn and unequivocal manner, that, till the present moment, I never wrote a syllable concerning him in the whole course of my life.

The reader will observe that I have only conducted Peter to town. His subsequent adventures are reserved till his next effusion of malevolent dulness shall provoke me to come forward again. It must not be supposed, however, that I have exhausted his country atchievements.—No; the tythe of them are yet untouched. I have now in my hand a letter from an Officer who assisted in kicking him out of Maker Camp for his scandalous indecencies.

LONDON,
July 7, 1800.

EPISTLE

TO

PETER PINDAR.

&c. &c.

WHILE many a NOBLE NAME, to virtue dear,
Delights the public eye, the public ear,
And fills thy canker'd breast with such annoy
As Satan felt * from innocence and joy ;
Why, Peter, leave the hated culprit free, 5
And vent, poor driveller, all thy spite on me ?

* ———— aside the Devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Ey'd them askance.———

MILTON.

While

While pure Religion's beam, bane to thy sight,

emblem
on. O'er many a mitre sheds distinguished light, *Here the true*
punter!

And Prelates, in the path their SAVIOUR trod,

In trembling hope, "walk humbly with their God;" 10

Why, Peter, leave the hated culprits free,

And vent, poor driveller, all thy spite on me?

While, with a radiance yet to courts unknown,

Calm, steady dignity surrounds the Throne,

And the tried worth, the virtues, of thy King, 15

Deep in thy soul infix the mortal sting;

Why, Peter, leave the hated culprit free,

And vent, poor driveller, all thy spite on me? X

Alas! scarce enter'd on the rolls of fame,

And but to ONE LOVED CIRCLE known by name, 20

How

did not for he attacked the King

How can I stead thee? Thou mayst toil, and strain,
Ransack for filth thy heart, for lies thy brain,
 Rave, storm,—’tis fruitless all. Abuse, be sure,
Abuse of ME, will ne’er “one sprat” procure,
 Bribe one night-cellar to admit thee in, 25
 Purchase one draught of gun-powder and gin;
 Seduce one brothel to display its charms,
Nor hire one hobbling strumpet to thy arms.

*What w
present ap
this?*

False fugitive! back to thy vomit flee—
 Troll the lascivious song, the fulsome glee, 30
 Truck praise for lust, hunt infant genius down,
 Strip modest merit of its last half-crown,
 Blow from thy mildew’d lips, on virtue blow,
 And blight the goodness thou can’st never know;

expl

'Tis well. But why on ME?—While every tongue 35
Of thy rank slanders, ranker life, yet rung,
Pronounc'd thy name with mingled hate and dread,
And pour'd its whole abhorrence on thy head ;
I spoke not, wrote not : ne'er did aught of thine
Profane, thank Heaven! one thought, one word, of mine.
True, when I heard thy deep-detested name,
A shivering horror crept through all my frame,
A damp, cold, chill, as if a snake or toad,
Had started unawares across my road ;
Yet I kept silence : still thy spleen or pride, 45
(Thy better demon absent from thy side)
Urg'd thee to new assaults. THERE IS a time,
When slowness to resist, becomes a crime ;
'TIS HERE! the hour of sufferance now is o'er,
And scorn shall screen thee from my arm no more. 50

Unhappy

Unhappy dotard, see ! thy hairs are grey—
In fitter lists thy waning strength display :
Go, dip thy trembling hands in coward gore,
And hew down Wests and Copleys by the score ;
But touch not ME, or, to thy peril know, 55
I give no easy conquest to the foe.
Come then, all filth, all venom as thou art,
Rage in thy eye, and rancour in thy heart,
Come with thy boasted arms, spite, malice, lies,
Smut, scandal, execrations, blasphemies ; 60
I brave 'em all. Lo, here I fix my stand,
And dare the utmost of thy tongue and hand,
Prepar'd each threat to baffle, or to spurn,
Each blow with ten-fold vigour to return.—

But WHAT is HE, that, with a Mohawk's air, 65
“ Cries havock, and lets slip the dogs of war ?”

A bloated

A bloated mass *, a gross, unkneaded clod,

A foe to man, a renegade from God,

From

* Now respecting “bloated masses,” and illiberal reflections on natural infirmities in general, most admirable are the observations of Peter Pindar. “I *may* have said, that a fellow with the form of the letter Z, who publicly attacks an unfortunate woman for a disorder of which the Divine Being is the sole Author, is ‘little less than a demon or a fool.’” Peter alludes to a couplet in the Baviad, in which Mrs. Robinson (the *unfortunate woman* here meant) is said to be moving on crutches towards the grave to light and wanton measures. It is probable that neither Peter nor the lady understood a syllable of what they read; otherwise they must have seen, that no reflection was intended on her “disorder,” whoever was the cause of it, but on the improper use she made of what the pious Peter is pleased to call a divine visitation.

But a word with you, “Sappho.” This is the second time you have wantonly fallen in my way. I humbly beseech you to let it be the last. I have sometimes more plainness than patience, and may be tempted to say what we shall both be sorry for. You rely, it may be, on the prowess of your flash-man—so, I think, they call Peter—you might rely with infinitely more wisdom, on a broken reed: for, to tell you a secret, which I care not how soon you repeat to Peter, I fear him even less than I do you—and *c’est beaucoup dire, çà*.

I did

From noxious childhood to pernicious age,

Sacred to infamy, through every stage.

70

I did not think to waste another word on myself; but now I am on the subject, I will just observe, that the “friend whose ruin I meditated” has the justest of all possible claims to the patronage and protection of the immaculate Peter.

As I am not quite certain that he has commissioned Peter to fling down the gauntlet for him, I shall say little at present. Many years ago, I drew up an *attested* account of the rise, progress, and termination of this dear “friend’s” connection with me. I have kept it concealed from every eye, and did, indeed, intend to destroy it; because I have no longer a wish to disturb the repose of an impotent enemy. It is, however, in Peter’s power to compel me to publish it in my own defence,—and as some encouragement for him to recur again to an affair of which he is as ignorant as of every thing else, I will assure him—I am about to speak a bold word—that in the narrative I have ready for the press, he will see his protégé depicted, and *most truly* depicted, with a perverseness of head, and a depravity of heart, worthy of all his envy! Meanwhile I congratulate the gentleman on his alliance with Peter Pindar, and the “unfortunate woman” his associate. It does him honour. Peter Pindar, Mrs. R———, and the Rev. Mr. ——— do, in fact, form such a constellation of chastity, morality, and piety, as has not often appeared to enlighten and sanctify this lower world!

CORNWALL remembers yet his first employ,
 And shuddering tells with what infernal joy,
 His little tongue in blasphemies was loos'd,
 His little hands in deeds of horror us'd :
 While mangled insects strew'd his cradle o'er, 75
 And limbs of birds distained his bib with gore.

Anon, on stronger animals he flew
 (For with his growth his savage passions grew) ;
 And oft, what time his violence fail'd to kill,
 He form'd the insidious drug* with wicked skill; 80
 Saw

* Let not the reader who shudders at this, therefore disbelieve it. Almost the first accounts I remember to have had of this man, (and they were from one of his own profession, from one who knew him well) related to the execrable use he made of his knowledge as an apothecary's boy, in torturing and destroying animals.

Who,

Saw with wild joy, in pangs till then untry'd,
Cats, dogs, expire ; and curs'd them as they died !

With riper years a different scene began,
And his hate turn'd from animals to man ;
Then letters, libels, flew on secret wings, 85
And wide around infix'd their venom'd stings ;
All fear'd, where none could ward, the coming blow,
And each man ey'd his neighbour as his foe ;
Till dragg'd to day, the lurking caitiff stood,
(Th' accursed cause of many a fatal feud), 90
And begg'd for mercy in so sad a strain,
So wept, so trembled, that the injur'd train
Who, cowering at their feet, a MISCREANT saw,
Too mean for punishment, too poor for law,

O'er-

O'erlook'd ('twas all they could) his numerous crimes, 95
And shipp'd him off "to ape and monkey climes."

THERE, while the negroes view'd with new disgust,
This prodigy of drunkenness and lust,
Explore the darkest cells, the dirtiest styes,
And roll in filth at which *their* gorge would rise ; 100
He play'd one master-trick to crown the whole,
And took, O Heavens ! the sacerdotal stole !
How shook the altar when he first drew near,
Hot from debauch, and with a shameless leer,
Pour'd stammering forth the yet unhallowed prayers, 105
Mix'd with convulsive sobs, and noisome airs !—
Then rose the people, passive now no more,
And from his limbs the sacred vestments tore ;

Dragg'd

Dragg'd him with groans, shouts, hisses, to the main,
And sent him to annoy these realms again. 110

Cornwall, that fondly deem'd herself reliev'd,
Ill-fated land ! once more the pest receiv'd ;
But, wary and forewarn'd, observ'd his course,
And track'd each slander to its proper source ;
'Till indignation, wide and wider spread, 115
Burst in one dreadful tempest on his head.

Then flight, pale flight, ensu'd !—'TWERE long to trace
His mazes, as he slunk from place to place ;
To count, whene'er unearth'd, what pumps he bore,
What horse-ponds, till the country he forswore, 120
And, chac'd by public vengeance up and down,
(Hopeless of shelter) fled at length to town :

Compell'd in crowds to hide his hated head,
 And spung'd on dirty whores for dirty bread.

* * * * *

* * * * *

LO, HERE THE REPTILE ! who, from some dark cell,
 Where all his veins with native poison swell,
 Crawls forth, a slimy toad, and spits and spues,
 The crude abortions of his loathsome muse, 130
 On all that Genius, all that Worth holds dear,
 Unsullied rank, and piety sincere ;
 While idiot mirth the base defilement lauds,
 And malice, with averted face, applauds !

LO, HERE THE BRUTAL SOT ! who, drench'd with gin,
 Lashes his wither'd nerves to tasteless sin ;

Squeals

Squeals out (with oaths and blasphemies between)
The impious song, the tale, the jest obscene ;
And careless views, amidst the barbarous roar,
His few grey hairs strew, one by one, the floor ! 140

Lo, HERE THE WRINKLED PROFLIGATE ! who stands
On nature's verge, and from his leprous hands
Shakes tainted verse ; who bids us, with the price
Of rancorous falsehoods, pander to his vice,
Give him to live the future as the past, 145
And in pollution wallow to the last !

Enough !—Yet, Peter ! mark my parting lay—
See ! thy last sands are fleeting fast away ;
And, what should more thy sluggish soul appal,
Thy limbs shrink up—THE WRITING ON THE WALL !— 150

O !

O ! check, a moment check, the obstreperous din
 Of guilty joy, and hear the voice within,
 The small, still voice of conscience, hear it cry,
 An Atheist thou *may'st* live, but can'st not die !

Give then, poor tinkling bellman of three-score ! 155
 Give thy lewd rhymes, thy lewder converse o'er ;
 Thy envy, hate—and, while thou yet hast power,
 On other thoughts employ the unvalu'd hour ;
 Lest as from crazy eld's diseaseful bed,
 Thou lift'st, to SPIT AT HEAVEN, thy palsied head, 160
 The BLOW arrive, and thou, reduc'd by fate,
 To change thy phrenzy for despair too late ;
 Close thy dim eyes a moment in the tomb,
 To wake for ever in THE LIFE TO COME,
 Wake to meet HIM whose “ Ord'nance thou hast slav'd*, ”
 Whose Mercy slighted, and whose Justice brav'd !

For ME—Why shouldst thou with abortive toil,
Waste the poor remnant of thy sputtering oil,
In filth and falsehood? Ignorant and absurd!
Pause from thy pains, and take my closing word; 170
Thou canst not think, nor have *I* power to tell,
How much I SCORN and HATE thee—so, farewell.

* ——— the lust-dicted man

That slaves thy ordinance, &c.

KING LEAR.

THE END.

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J. WRIGHT.

Piccadilly, June 10, 1800.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

E P I S T L E

TO

P E T E R P I N D A R.

PRINTED FOR J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY,

By T. Baylis, Greville Street, London.

POSTSCRIPT.

August 4, 1800.

ON the publication of the “Epistle to Peter Pindar”, I received a number of letters, thanking me for the castigation I had inflicted on this hoary profligate.

Besides thanks, some of these letters conveyed additional instances of his turpitude; and one among the rest, brought me acquainted, for the first time, with certain propensities of Peter, which I do not think fit to mention; referring me for some information on the subject, to the Newspaper called “The Times,” and for more to a gentleman whom he will guess at without my assistance. I made no secret of this letter, (for I am determined to avoid all *secrecy* with Peter) but put it into the hands of my publisher, who, at my request, sent an advertisement to the papers for the “Times” in question.

This advertisement, instead of the articles I sought, produced the following Letter. The reader will observe, that it is a Fac Simile.

On this I beg leave to make a few remarks. “Your attempt,” says the letter writer, “to stamp the character of Villainy upon a certain person, is traced to its source.” Observe the delicacy of the gentleman: “a certain person!” not Peter Pindar, but *a certain* person. “Villainy” and Peter have cast off hands, it seems, and the admiring world may expect to be called on, in due time, to *mark their divorce!*—“Is traced to its source.” Good; I am mightily pleased to hear it: for my part, I knew of no *source* but the Bird Cage Walk: if Peter, or his associates “fit body to fit head,” have any other, I cannot choose but congratulate them on it! ’Tis a poor spirited rat, they say, that has but one hole—but basta—

“The *Bird Cage Walk*, shall have its reward.” Good again! I love a grateful mind; and if Peter feel inclined to honour this favoured spot with an “Ode,” ’tis no more than might be expected from his well-known love of justice. I remember a very pretty poem addressed by a young gentleman to an Orange Tree under which he had enjoyed some happy moments with his mistress. Very probably this, *mutatis mutandis*, might answer Peter’s purpose, and if so, I care not if I point it out to him. Be this as it may, I expect his thanks for the hint—with which I take my leave, obstinately declining every idea of being “repaid” in any other manner, either by him or his friend in the white night-cap.

Adieu,

Adieu, bon soir, et bonne nuit ;
 De votre Page qui vous suit,
 Et qui derrière vous se glisse,
 Et de tout ce qu'il sait aussi,
 Grand merci, Monsieur D'ASSOUCI.
 D'un si bel offre de service,
 Monsieur D'ASSOUCI, grand merci.

Paulo majora canamus. Nothing can so clearly point out the desolate and lonely condition of this wretched man, as the not being possessed of a single friend in the world, to put him in mind of his rapid approaches to dotage. Approaches did I say? Nay, what but dotage itself could have produced the foregoing letter? Surely our modern Peribomius (and I declare I was not aware of the *perfect* similarity of character, when I first gave him the name) cannot be weak enough to suppose I am to be frightened by such contemptible bug-bears!—Sic notus Ulysses? No, no, honest Peribomius, there is not a thing on earth I despise so much as thy threats; unless, peradventure, it be thy praise. Ad populum phaleras. Carry them to * * * * and * * * * *. It is needless to put on thy cat-a-mountain looks to me, and affect the ruffian; “Captain! for what, you abominable, damn’d cheater? for “tearing a poor whore’s ruff in a bawdy house?” Tut man!

I know

I know thee, intus et in cute, and fearlessly pronounce thee a most despicable poltroon, a white-liver'd, crest-fallen, and thrice-beaten coward.

“ *Prompt vengeance.*”—Poor broken-winded dotard, how art thou to obtain it? It is so long since thou wast accustomed to mix up drugs for the cats and dogs of thy master's neighbourhood, that thou hast probably forgot the ingredients: Add to this, that drunkenness and debauchery have made thy hands too unsteady for a pistol, and too feeble for a stiletto. Where then is thy “prompt vengeance?” “Go, go, Jeronymo! go to thy cold bed, and warm “thee; leave fighting o'days and foining o'nights, and begin to “patch up thy old body for Heaven:” above all, write no threatening letters, at least to me—be satisfied with my scorn and detestation, and do not waste thy last poor puff in provoking my ridicule and contempt.

The admirers of *delicacy* and Peter Pindar will doubtless ask, why I have not tamely submitted to his unprovoked malignity, like my betters?

————— I'll not answer that:

But say it is my humour; is it answered?

I know of no statute in Peter's favour that prescribes how long his filth and venom shall be borne unnoticed; nor have I heard of any laws that invest him with a sacro-sanct character. Since his “Pindariana” (the essence of stupidity and nonsense) his
poetical

poetical reputation is almost as low as his moral one; and both may be assailed with equal ease and security. Add to this, that I have endured his insolence for many years without reply, and that I think fit to do so no longer.

I could, indeed, have wished not to be forced upon the chastisement of such a nauseous compound of profligacy and folly; now, however, that I have roused myself, if I do not probe him to the quick, if I do not anatemize him, and lay open every artery, vein, and nerve of sin to the public scorn, I consent to be written down for that tame fool, which he and his followers seem to have thought me.

This labour will be its own reward. I confess I have much pleasure in stripping this Saracen-headed scarecrow, and shewing those who stood in awe of the fluttering of his miserable rags, what a bald, and shapeless, and uncouth block lay under them! I shall see the day when even dogs will lift up their legs against him, and each of his besotted admirers cry out with Caliban in the play,

————— What a thrice double ass

Was I, to take this DRUNKARD for a God,

And worship this DULL FOOL!

While, however, I am perfectly satisfied with the method I am pursuing, I cannot but express my astonishment that no one of the many hundreds he has wantonly and wickedly libelled, should have had recourse to the laws of his country for redress. I learn
from

from the last Anti-Jacobin Review, that when Lord Lonsdale was about to do one good act, and prosecute the fellow, he crept, and cringed, and fawned, and kissed the feet, and licked the spittle of every retainer in his lordship's family—So HE ESCAPED—and so has a long course of impunity given an air of courage to the most tame and heartless coward that ever insulted the worth, and virtue, and spirit, and dignity of a country.

I have yet a word to say respecting myself; of which Peter, if he pleases, may take advantage. I shall never make the slightest reply to any of his slanders, or notice them in any manner whatever. This may probably disappoint those gentle spirits who promise themselves an Amœbœan eclogue. He may, therefore, ring senseless changes on “cobblers and pimps” (catamites, I suppose, he will think proper to omit) ’till he is as weary as his half dozen readers, I care not. He may even bluster and THREATEN; still, I care not. I am not, indeed, to learn that *res mortifera est inimicus pumice lævis*; but such is my thorough conviction of his impotence, that till language more adequate to my feelings can be found, I shall still continue to say, I care not; and still continue to hold him and his utmost efforts in ineffable scorn and derision.

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